



Winter Safety Reminder—Watch Your Step

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As the winter has progressed, numerous slip and fall events have been reported across the Complex. One recent injury at the Office of River Protection (ORP) resulted in a thorough review that identified several effective corrective actions to prevent recurrence. The slip/fall injury at the ORP Waste Treatment Plant (WTP), as well as precautionary measures for avoiding similar injuries during hazardous weather, are discussed below.

On January 5, 2009, at WTP, 4 to 6 inches of snow fell overnight following a 4-day holiday shutdown. The snowfall covered ice in parking lots and on walkways that had formed over several days of fluctuating temperatures, resulting in treacherous walking conditions. One worker slipped on the ice, fell, and broke his hip when he was walking from the parking lot to his work location. Approximately 100 other workers also fell between the parking lot and their work locations, and 30 of them reported to first aid.

ORP management identified a number of corrective actions to reduce the potential for slip and fall events during similar snow and ice conditions, including the following.

- A site-wide assessment of winter snow/ice hazards may not be sufficient to address acute facility-specific conditions/hazards. Facility-specific hazard assessments involving professional safety staff may be required when making decisions on snow/ice removal timing and work delays.
- Workers should stay on designated cleared/treated pathways in and around the worksite.

Protect Yourself in Icy and Inclement Weather

Wear boots or overshoes with gripping soles.

Do not walk with your hands in your pockets. This reduces the ability to use your arms for balance if you slip.

Take short, deliberate, shuffling steps in very icy areas.

Don't walk on uneven surfaces. Avoid ice-covered curbs.

Try to walk on snow rather than on ice.

Don't talk on a cellular phone while walking on snow or ice. Give your full attention to walking.

Report any unsafe conditions to facilities personnel (e.g., the need for salt or snow removal).

Be extra careful when getting out of your vehicle. Steady yourself on the doorframe until you have gained your balance.

Don't take shortcuts. Always use sidewalks and the cleared paths in parking lots.

When walking after dark or in shadowed areas, be alert for black ice.

Use handrails for balance wherever available.

If you must walk in the street, walk against traffic.



OPERATING EXPERIENCE SUMMARY

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- Improve methods of identifying designated pathways (e.g., cones, stanchions, blue flashing lights or other distinctive lighting of pathways, information boards).
- Provide workers with containers of salt or ice melt chemicals for their personal vehicles that can be spread on the parking lot as they step out of their cars and on designated pathways as they walk to work areas.
- Provide foot traction devices for shoes or boots.

Most slips and falls can be prevented by taking a few simple precautions, like those listed above. The textbox on the previous page, which is taken from OE Summary [2004-24](#), also lists precautions workers can take to avoid slips and falls during hazardous weather conditions. In addition, an Office of Health, Safety and Security Causal Analysis Review, *Winter Hazards, Site Safety Measures and Worker Injuries*, published December 10, 2008, includes lessons learned from slip and fall accidents that occurred in the winter of 2006–2007 and links to other winter safety information.

The Causal Analysis Review can be accessed at www.hss.energy.gov/CSA/CausalAnalysisReview_WinterHazards_121008.pdf.